

Dear Parishioners,

On this Mother's Day, First Holy Communion Day and the 12th Anniversary of my Ordination I'd like to share a reflection by Pope Benedict Emeritus on the Cure of Ars:

*The Curé of Ars was very humble, yet as a priest he was conscious of being an immense gift to his people: "A good shepherd, a pastor after God's heart, is the greatest treasure which the good Lord can grant to a parish, and one of the most precious gifts of divine mercy". He spoke of the priesthood as if incapable of fathoming the grandeur of the gift and task entrusted to a human creature: "O, how great is the priest! ... If he realized what he is, he would die... God obeys him: he utters a few words and the Lord descends from heaven at his voice, to be contained within a small host...". Explaining to his parishioners the importance of the sacraments, he would say: "Without the Sacrament of Holy Orders, we would not have the Lord. Who put him there in that tabernacle? The priest. Who welcomed your soul at the beginning of your life? The priest. Who feeds your soul and gives it strength for its journey? The priest. Who will prepare it to appear before God, bathing it one last time in the blood of Jesus Christ? The priest, always the priest. And if this soul should happen to die [as a result of sin], who will raise it up, who will restore its calm and peace? Again, the priest... After God, the priest is everything! ... Only in heaven will he fully realize what he is". These words, welling up from the priestly heart of the holy pastor, might sound excessive. Yet they reveal the high esteem in which he held the sacrament of the priesthood. He seemed overwhelmed by a boundless sense of responsibility: "Were we to fully realize what a priest is on earth, we would die: not of fright, but of love... Without the priest, the passion and death of our Lord would be of no avail. It is the priest who continues the work of redemption on earth... What use would be a house filled with gold, were there no one to open its door? The priest holds the key to the treasures of heaven: it is he who opens the door: he is the steward of the good Lord; the administrator of his goods ... Leave a parish for twenty years without a priest, and they will end by worshipping the beasts there ... The priest is not a priest for himself, he is a priest for you".*

*He arrived in Ars, a village of 230 souls, warned by his Bishop beforehand that there he would find religious practice in a sorry state: "There is little love of God in that parish; you will be the one to put it there". As a result, he was deeply aware that he needed to go there to embody Christ's presence and to bear witness to his saving mercy: "[Lord,] grant me the conversion of my parish; I am willing to suffer whatever you wish, for my entire life!": with this prayer he entered upon his mission. The Curé devoted himself completely to his parish's conversion, setting before all else the Christian education of the people in his care. Dear brother priests, let us ask the Lord Jesus for the grace to learn for ourselves something of the pastoral plan of Saint John Mary Vianney! The first thing we need to learn is the complete identification of the man with his ministry. In Jesus, person and mission tend to coincide: all Christ's saving activity was, and is, an expression of his "filial consciousness" which from all eternity stands before the Father in an attitude of loving submission to his will. In a humble yet genuine way, every priest must aim for a similar identification. Certainly this is not to forget that the efficacy of the ministry is independent of the holiness of the minister; but neither can we overlook the extraordinary fruitfulness of the encounter between the ministry's objective holiness and the subjective holiness of the minister. The Curé of Ars immediately set about this patient and humble task of harmonizing his life as a minister with the holiness of the ministry he had received, by deciding to "live", physically, in his parish church: As his first biographer tells us: "Upon his arrival, he chose the church as his home. He entered the church before dawn and did not leave it until after the evening Angelus. There he was to be sought whenever needed".*

*Saint John Mary Vianney taught his parishioners primarily by the witness of his life. It was from his example that they learned to pray, halting frequently before the tabernacle for a visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. "One need not say much to pray well" – the Curé explained to them – "We know that Jesus is there in the tabernacle: let us open our hearts to him, let us rejoice in his sacred presence. That is the best prayer". And he would urge them: "Come to communion, my brothers and sisters, come to Jesus. Come to live from him in order to live with him... "Of course you are not worthy of him, but you need him!". This way of educating the faithful to the Eucharistic presence and to communion proved most effective when they saw him celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Those present said that "it was not possible to find a finer example of worship... He gazed upon the Host with immense love". "All good works, taken together, do not equal the sacrifice of the Mass" – he would say – "since they are human works, while the Holy Mass is the work of God". He was convinced that the fervor of a priest's life depended entirely upon the Mass: "The reason why a priest is lax is that he does not pay attention to the Mass! My God, how we ought to pity a priest who celebrates as if he were engaged in something routine!". He was accustomed, when celebrating, also to offer his own life in sacrifice: "What a good thing it is for a priest each morning to offer himself to God in sacrifice!".*

*This deep personal identification with the Sacrifice of the Cross led him – by a sole inward movement – from the altar to the confessional. Priests ought never to be resigned to empty confessionals or the apparent indifference of the faithful to this sacrament. In France, at the time of the Curé of Ars, confession was no more easy or frequent than in our own day, since the upheaval caused by the revolution had long inhibited the practice of religion. Yet he sought in every way, by his preaching and his powers of persuasion, to help his parishioners to rediscover the meaning and beauty of the sacrament of Penance, presenting it as an inherent demand of the Eucharistic presence. He thus created a "virtuous" circle. By spending long hours in church before the tabernacle, he inspired the faithful to imitate him by coming to visit Jesus with the knowledge that their parish priest would be there, ready to listen and offer forgiveness. Later, the growing numbers of penitents from all over France would keep him in the confessional for up to sixteen hours a day. It was said that Ars had become "a great hospital of souls". His first biographer relates that "the grace he obtained [for the conversion of sinners] was so powerful that it would pursue them, not leaving them a moment of peace!". The saintly Curé reflected something of the same idea when he said: "It is not the sinner who returns to God to beg his forgiveness, but God himself who runs after the sinner and makes him return to him". "This good Savior is so filled with love that he seeks us everywhere".*

Please pray for Mothers, First Communicants and Priests, this and every Sunday.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Father Newcomb

*The 2nd collection this weekend will be for the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Please give it your prayerful consideration.*

**St. Mary's Little Lambs Early Childhood Learning Center** holds a Summer Day Camp with the theme, "Sightseeing with Jesus." Daily activities include Bible stories, songs, games, crafts, and water play. We hope to aid the children of our school and parish and the surrounding community in continuing their spiritual growth during the summer months while providing a safe and fun recreational summer program. Our camp will be open to children ages three to eight. Registration for Summer Camp will open Monday, May 1 and close Wednesday, May 31. **Early or late registrations will NOT be accepted.** For information, please contact director, Eileen Carmody at 845 858-4208

**Open House at St. Mary's Little Lambs-** St. Mary's Little Lambs Early Childhood Learning Center is having an Open House on Sunday, May 21 from 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Little Lambs is inviting the members of our parish to visit the classrooms, meet some of the staff, and learn how Little Lambs is raising standards in Catholic education. Little Lambs has begun accepting registrations for the 2017-18 school year. For more information, parents of prospective students are encouraged to visit the Open House or contact director, Eileen 858-4208 or little-lambs@stmarysportjervis.com

**The Port Jervis and Milford Knights of Columbus Councils** will be hosting a charity golf outing on Wednesday May 24, 2017 at the High Point Country Club in Montague N.J. The cost is \$100 per golfer and includes green fees, cart, lunch on the course, raffles, prizes and a buffet dinner at the Erie Trackside Manor. Registration is at 11:00 A.M. with a noon shotgun start. Those interested should contact Steve at (845)629-3642.



**The Ascension of the Lord Mass schedule:**  
 Wednesday, May 24th at 7pm  
 Thursday, May 25th at 9am.

The brothers, sisters, and children of the Fox Hill Community in Walden, NY warmly invite our Catholic friends to a Celebration of Life at their Bruderhof in Walden from 12pm-7pm on May 20th at 80 Coleman Rd to share an afternoon with them and representatives of the orders, dioceses, and hierarchy. Family fun, good Bruderhof cooking, and fellowship for all. RSVP 778-7561 or email danawiser@ccimail.com.

The 9am Mass on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29th, will be held at St. Mary's Cemetery. Please bring your own lawn chair. The parish office is closed that day.

## ANNOUNCED MASSES

- Monday, May 15**  
 9:00am Raymond Gansarski, by the family Mary Ann Rohner, by Jim and family
- Tuesday, May 16**  
 9:00am Anne Morey, by Dr. Jane Brooks
- Wednesday, May 17**  
 9:00am Tom Earley, by Guy and Kathy Barnes
- Thursday, May 18 (John I, Pope and martyr)**  
 9:00am Marie and Frank McIntire, by Dolores and family  
 Friedrich Klostermeier, by Joe, Erika and family
- Saturday, May 20**  
 4:00pm Deceased members of the Haering family, by Hannelore Kucher
- Sunday, May 21**  
 8:30am The parishioners of St. Mary's Frank W. and Mary A. Rombousek, by son Tom  
 11:30am Etta Mae Hennessy, by Dan and Theresa Kavanagh



*The Sanctuary Lamp will burn brightly in the church this week, in memory of Robert R. Case, Jr., by Dolores Case and family.*

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK:** Joann Wilcox, Jackie Mundy, Theresa Fuller, Donald Wolff, Walter Szpakowicz, Frances Brennan, Aedan Roach, Jim Roach, Robyn Radzikowski, Elizabeth Brennan, Richard Samek, Sandy Osbourne, John McKeon, William Lincoln, Michael Barnes, Jeanine Lincoln, Mary Platania, Maureen Hildebrandt, Andrea Fedoruk, Angela Portella, Pauline Portella, Grace Maillet, Joseph Cox, William Gaide, Jacqueline Hamilton, Marianne Ripel, Pat Arnold, Debi Cotugno, Conner McHugh, David M. Phillips, Scott Smith, Jim Muller, Charles Hildebrandt, Joe Formisano, Theresa Kavanagh, Fontano family, Kevin Smith, Ron Evans, Barbara Straub, Flossie Brown, Mae Prill, Elizabeth Startup Jones, Jose Ramos, Carmen Ramos, Steve Wilkinson, Eric Santiago, Adam Kowal, Jayne Kowal, Richard Schindler, and Amelia Quinn.

The collection for May 6/7 was \$6,342.50.  
 Thank you for your continued generosity.

### *Liturgical Ministers for May 20th/21st, 2017*

| MASS    | LECTOR    | MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION             | ALTAR SERVERS                     |
|---------|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 4:00PM  | L. AVELLA | H. ECKES, K. BOBISH, A. WITKOWSKI       | E. AND A. WITKOWSKI, D. KLOTZ     |
| 8:30AM  | D. LEGATO | T. CALVARIO, S. RIORDAN, J. TAYLOR      | T. LAMOREAUX, J. AND J. LEGATO    |
| 11:30AM | M. ESLING | B. DENNINGTON, D. LIVINGSTON, T. MARION | S. CUELLO, A. ST. LOUIS, S. MASCI |